

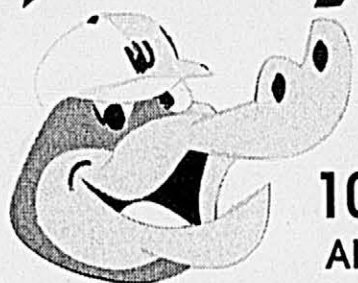
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Off The Darkroom Floor

photo by Lori Braun
digital editing by Paul Reeve



Letter to the Editor

I read with interest the interview with Shapiro in the last issue of the McGill Daily Culture. I'd like to respond to some of

Shapiro's comments. First, Shapiro says "One of the interesting things is that I haven't seen a copy of the Alternative Budget because nobody feels it's appropriate to send it to me." The first part of the statement may be true because we sent the budget out on the 25th. The second part is a false assumption — we sent a copy to all the constituents of the University community — that includes the administration (whether we like it or not!). Second, Shapiro says that they "didn't wait for the al-

ternative budget" to consider using the interest from endowments, and that "the Board said it was inappropriate." Why then is this the first that the community has heard of it? THIS IS THE POINT! We were not consulted. Finally, Shapiro says, "The business of students at the university is to study. The business of faculty is to teach and to do research. I don't think that under the name of democracy, you can usefully meet, and sensibly say that the business of students is to create the

budget." Now I have huge faith in the reporting of the Daily... I also know that Shapiro is a "politico" — he says what the audience wants to hear... Whatever the case may be — I CAN'T BELIEVE HE ACTUALLY SAID THAT! Is he implying that we need to trust the CEO's of financial institutions to take care of our affairs? Is he saying that we should not get involved in things that are "over our heads"? Is he insinuating that we should butt-out? What is he saying?

- Anna Kruzynski

The McGill Daily Culture

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Lost Horizons

Connections between *Mon oncle Antoine* and *Kundun*

by Julien Lapointe

We often turn away from our selves, in a state of abandonment, to something which seems different and new. This process of discovery, however, bears little or no contrast to introspection. The act itself may be dissimilar, but the dynamics are the same. "Soul-searching", as some people derisively call it, involves considering ourselves as strangers; the ensuing self-examination is a travel to a foreign land - somewhere from which we may first feel estranged, but the discovery of which is integral to our experience as humans.

This mental or spiritual trip can be viewed as an overflow of images and impressions, accumulatively absorbed by us, but perhaps only understood much later. Martin Scorsese's *Kundun*, a biography of the fourteenth Dalai Lama, may provoke a similar sensation. Seemingly amorphous in structure, the film expresses a cinematic purity comparable to that of *2001*: it is a non-story told almost entirely through visual design, with the sequences so loosely conceived that they seem to blend into one another indistinguishably. Culturally, Scorsese was undoubtedly motivated to find a cinematic equivalent to the Buddhist philosophy - he gives expression to the theme of the transient and tenuous nature of life. This notion of transformation extends beyond the work itself. As an American movie, this innovative work appears primarily as an act of reinvention - not just for Scorsese and the Hollywood tradition, but more importantly for whichever Westerner whose perception and

understanding of cinema will be altered with this unusual film.

Released concurrently, albeit coincidentally, with the Scorsese picture is the restored classic *Mon oncle Antoine*, directed in '71 by Claude Jutra. Watching its drama unfold in a (for many of us) remote, rural setting is like being invited to partake in some unknown ritual. Unlike *Kundun*, Jutra's work functions within recognizable dramatic archetypes, with familiar-seeming

positive ends stylistically, but they each express the cinema's power of evocation. Scorsese's films are typically marked by their relentlessness in assaulting the viewer. Visual splendor is deployed in an absorbing and alien manner - camera movements that are either elaborate and lyrical (*Casino*) or short, quick and abrupt (*Taxi Driver*) escalate, drawing us in as the film grows hopelessly stylized - and the characters' fates go irretrievably sour. Whether

array of rich hues had evoked. Mao's invasion and consequential erosion of Tibet as it once was, is the unspeakable turning point. The massacres are never directly shown, but their existence is constantly reminded of: an awesome aerial shot has the Lama standing among a few dead monks. The camera then retreats backwards as it is revealed that the deceased are in fact countless in number, spread out over the ground and surrounding the Dalai

ful. Narration is nearly irrelevant, as in Chekov's plays; the setting tells its own story. The artist relates the ongoing straightforwardly - as a village member endowed with directorial omniscience.

Both films are highly personal depictions of landscapes in time and space. But they are anything but dissociated from political consciousness. The highly stylized *Kundun* and the small-scale *Mon oncle Antoine* are very much aware of a larger worldview, to which their supposed self-contained universes are tied up. External forces disrupt the harmony of Tibet and Black Lake (respectively, Maoism and the Anglo patronage to the Québec proletariat).

The case is less tangible in *Antoine*, in which case it is ultimately an unexpected death which causes the drama to darken. But the film is in no way



characters who have (at first) a typical, folksy, simple-natured appeal. More than midway through the film, a fifteen year old dies and the tone appropriately takes a radical turn. Jutra may always restrain himself to a simple, realistic *mise en scène*, but he varies its expression. In this third act, the colours are all somber (the setting is nighttime) and sound is kept to a minimum. There are light, ironic touches - during a nocturnal horse-drawn carriage trip, the coffin falls off when the horse runs too fast - whose morbid quality underscores the predominantly bleak mood. Death upsets the quaint, otherwise pictorial, village setting, because we realize the characters are in fact stuck there, quite indefinitely.

Kundun and *Antoine* are at op-

posing their action in Tibet or Black Lake, Quebec, both Scorsese and Jutra confront the audience with the irrevocability of loss. "Things change," an instructor teaches the Lama at an early age; in *Kundun* and *Antoine*, the surrounding worlds collapse.

The subtle, almost symmetrical narrative structure of *Kundun* exposes two separate forms of conversion: one spiritual (Buddhism), the other ideological (Communism). In Scorsese's visual set-up, Maoist grey suits are only one of many colours throughout the work; rendering their stark intrusion into the film all the more potent. They dominate their scenes within the film. The monochromaticity drives out all vitality that the previous sequences'

Lama. The scene defies all sense of realism; Scorsese has combined the epic with the abstract, and the *idea* of death has never been so overwhelming.

Scorsese is such an outsider to Tibetan Buddhism, he codes his film in a seemingly fantasy-based visual language that's meant (among other effects) to startle. Jutra, by contrast, is so at ease with his provincial, Francophone milieu, he doesn't hesitate to cast himself in one of the leading (and at times less likeable) roles. The acute intimacy of the towns depiction reveals Jutra's social and cultural ease with it. The whole film is impregnated with a feeling of slowness; the action - compressed into one day (Christmas Eve) - is absolutely non-event-

ambiguous about its political stance. Jutra shows his people during a Christmas Eve celebration, as if to underline that they don't need their socially privileged, Anglophone boss in matters of cultural self-determination. Their holiday is their retreat space from the unpleasant working conditions of the mine. In this sense he also shows that the safe haven is no escape from death. As with in *Kundun*, the inner sanctity of a self-sustaining system eventually decays.

Kundun is currently playing at Loews and Mon Oncle Antoine at the Parisien (Copy will be available from the ONF)

Assuming Nothing

Local cartoonist publishes collection

by Kim Valenta

Montreal cartoonist and illustrator Leanne Franson has finally published a properly bound collection of her comic strips, a loosely biographical series of adventures of the queer and quirky Liliane. (The name Liliane is from the constant Quebecois mispronunciation of 'Leanne'.)

Leanne began to photocopy and distribute her cartoons after earning a fine arts degree from Concordia. At the time, she was making a living as a Swedish-style masseuse, thinking up story lines and sketching between clients. She also worked in a coffee house to pay the rent between doodles. It is these doodles from whence sprang Liliane, a strong and intelligent biddy who struggles with everything from jealous cats to coming out. After a decade of sporadic production, a selection of her comics were put together in the wonderful new publication entitled Assume Nothing. Though more zines are in the making, and her publisher wants a second collection, Leanne prefers to concentrate most of her efforts on her career as an illustrator—she was recently nominated for both the Governor General's Award and France's St-Exupéry Prize for her work on the children's book

L'Ourson qui voulait une Juliette...

Assume Nothing, on the other hand, is an intelligent, candid and often hilarious compilation, which covers politics, personal crisis and pregnancy, amongst other things. Even her pets are incorporated into her work. The 'smartass' comics star cats Zania and the late Butler, as well as Muesli the German Shepherd.

Despite the element of humour, Liliane's voice comes through clearly and powerfully. "...my cats are both fixed and even they have more meaningful physical stimulation than I do." She proselytizes, agonizes and basically expounds on the everyday, the fantastic and the funny.

There is something so intrinsically personal about Leanne Franson's comics, that one cannot help being drawn into them. When asked exactly how close to her character she really was, Franson says that it's like how one always comes up with the perfect thing to say about an hour too late. "Liliane is definitely me, after I've had ten years to think about it."

Being as out as she is, one might expect her to have had problems with the less open-minded. Leanne insists that her feedback has

been mostly in the form of fan letters, and that being actively out is much safer than being in the closet. Says Franson: "Some people have this idea that by being in the closet, by being silent they're protected, and I've always felt the exact opposite way... the more that you're out, the more frank about it you are, the less likely people are to hit you over the head, because you've engaged them as human beings and they can't make you into some weird, bizarre person."

And engage us as human beings she does. Through well-drawn, well-spoken anecdotes we are invited to enter a world that may not be everyone's, but is one that we can all relate to as members of the same species. It's a refreshingly honest work with a solid and original voice that I encourage everyone to experience. Despite any outward political differences one might have, it is impossible not to be enchanted.

Assume Nothing, from Slab-o-Concrete Publications, is available at L'Androgyne, Nebula and Fichtre! (\$12) alongside all 32 back issues of the Liliane minibooks (\$1.50 each). These can also be ordered directly from her at P.O. Box 274, Station Place du Parc, Montreal H2W 2N8.

Culturebrief

Bolstering Canadian Content

by Sonia Verma

Canada's movie industry is facing the prospect of a major change stemming from a discussion paper released yesterday by Heritage Minister Sheila Copps. Copps addressed movie-industry representatives at a dinner held in Montreal to mark the 30th anniversary of Telefilm Canada.

The discussion paper is Copps' solution for an industry suffering from a persistent lack of viewers. Although Canada's film industry has nearly doubled in size over the past five years, a shortfall of funding has crippled producers' abilities to effectively market and distribute Canadian films.

According to Sylvie Powell, media spokesperson for the Canadian Film and Television Production Association (CFTPA), the 20-25 films released in Canada per year are produced on a budget one twentieth the size of an average Hollywood film. "Hollywood films have ten

times what we have to put towards marketing," Powell commented, "Something absolutely needs to be done about the Canadian feature film."

To address the problem, Heritage Canada officials propose the creation of a fund to boost publicity capacity for Canadian producers. The discussion paper also suggests the creation of a new federal organization to award grants to Canadian producers. Currently, Telefilm Canada has jurisdiction over funding for feature films based on Canadian content regulations—a process which has resulted in mediocrity according to some critics who maintain that funding decisions should be made according to marketability.

The most controversial proposal outlined in the document involves a move to bolster Canadian content and place firmer controls on the

distribution rights of foreign films. This would be accomplished through implementing quotas for Canadian films on domestic theatre-screens and requiring US distribution companies to purchase rights to operate North of the border. Currently, US distributors work without restriction in Canada, taking advantage of the low Canadian dollar. Protectionist regulations are already in place in several European countries which have resulted in stronger domestic movie industries.

Following the release of Copps' discussion paper, CFTPA members are planning to blitz ministry officials to ensure that their interests are incorporated into any policy decisions the government makes.

—with files from Doug Saunders & The Globe and Mail

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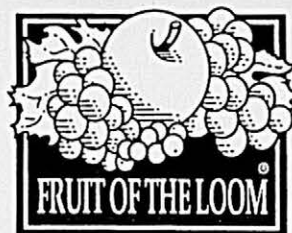


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A or Should We Not B

by Darrell Tan

Debating th

A group of nearly 70 people converged in the Union Building cafeteria Tuesday evening for what turned out to be a highly participatory panel discussion on queer activism. A feature event for this year's Third Annual McGill Pride Week, which runs from January 30 to February 6, the panel sought not only to understand the meaning of the term 'queer activism', but to analyze the major sites and implications of its struggles as well.

Both Olivia Jensen, a McGill Professor who has spoken frequently on transgender / transsexual issues, and Rebecca Pates, an activist and McGill graduate student who moderated the discussion, spoke clearly in favour of grassroots change, be it through subversion of oppressive social institutions (such as government legislation, powerful corporations, etc.) or through complete anarchist rejection of them altogether. These views appeared somewhat in contrast to those of John Fisher, President of Equality for Gays and Lesbians Everywhere, a political lobbying group based in Ottawa. Fisher acknowledged the value of working at the grassroots level, but maintained that institutional work is essential as well, asking, "what do you do when the state gets to make decisions for us?" Though he admitted that he personally "wouldn't touch gay marriage with a barge pole," for instance, Fisher states that he lobbies government in favour of gay marriage nevertheless "since right now the state makes that decision for us."

Despite this apparent polarization of viewpoints, Matthew Hays, Associate Editor for the *Montréal Mirror*, pointed out that there is a false dichotomy between the 'demo activism' of in-your-face demonstrations and protests and the 'suit activism' of meetings, political lobbying and sitting at negotiating tables. The range of other activists on the panel clearly demonstrated this point. In addition to Hays, whose journalistic accounts on queer issues are familiar to many, Alison Carpenter's work in helping others explore their creative energy and sexual lives, for instance, is inherently linked to her activist beliefs in al-

lying queer movements with other social struggles. Montréal activist Elana Wright's involvements have focused on building communities, whether by starting up projects like Divers Cité and the Quebec Lesbian Network, or by working on others like Image

"misses the small steps in building community one day and all having gay marriages the next; there's value in standing on your own." In his case, this has meant coming out to and sharing opinions with his friends - the majority of whom happen to be straight.

McLeod, one of LBGTGM's coordinators, "It's great that we've acknowledged the importance of transgendered people through the group's name, but at the same time, we actually haven't done enough programming on trans issues yet." Similarly, Jensen spoke of her experience several years ago in LAGEM - Lesbian and Gay Employees of McGill. At the time, she had insisted on being an associate member of the group only, since she felt clearly excluded by the group's name.

What kind of community, then, is required for there to be activism? Communities were traditionally conceived based on geographical concepts of communal living. But as was clearly pointed out, the 'McGill Community,' for one, comprises a population which continually has less and less in common; administrators are talking about privatizing the university while students on the same campus are signing petitions about increasing educational accessibility. More often, however, communities within discourses of social justice

and activism have referred to movements based on identity politics, or minority-based politics. In this context, it has been important to situate individuals within communities based on ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, social class etc. Identity politics have been invaluable in elucidating interactions between people's 'alliances' to different facets of their being, and in understanding the social construction of many supposed 'identities.'

The Death of Identity Politics?

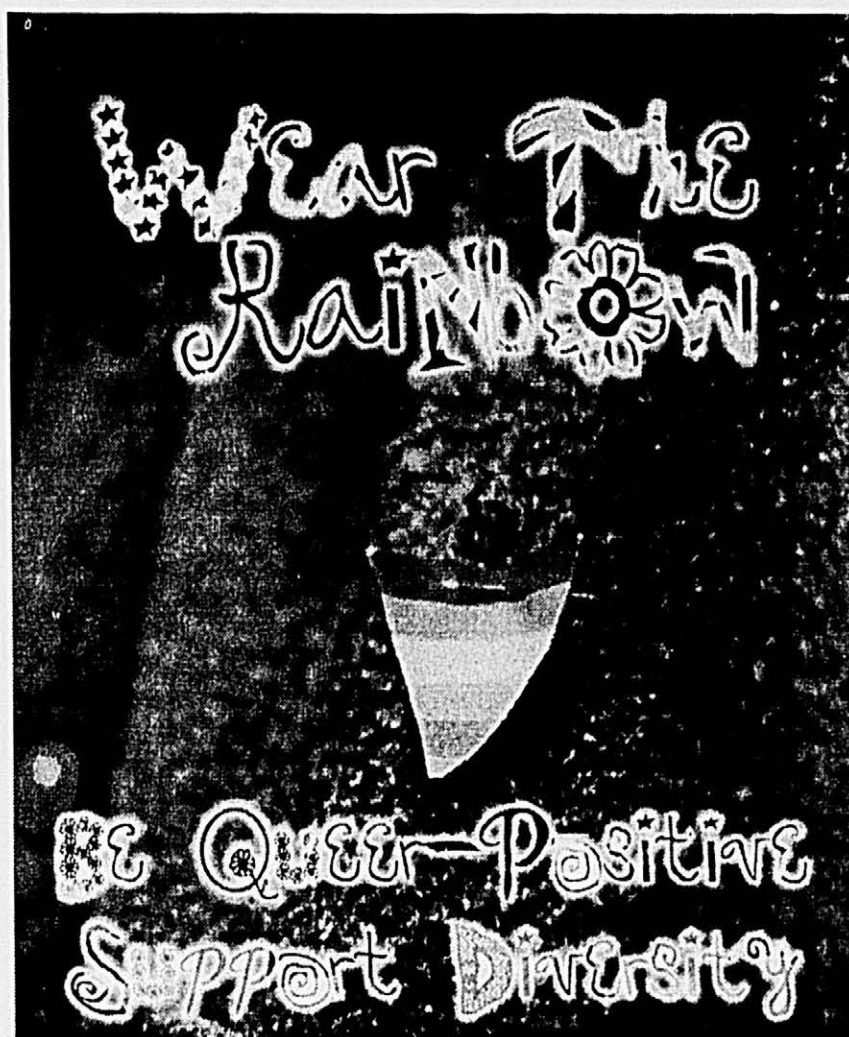
But more and more queer and other activists are beginning to question the continuing relevance of identity politics. How meaningful is it to understand people and social systems

through their identity/ies only?

Perhaps what's more important than identity politics is the distinction we should make between activist-based communities and identity-based communities. An argument that emerged from Tuesday's discussion thus contends not that "without community, there is no activism," but rather that activism itself can define 'community'. It may be more useful, then, to understand a group such as the panelists and participants as a 'community of activists,' or even to understand activism as a phenomenon which transcends the perhaps too narrow term "community."

This latter argument takes at least two forms. First, activism may be about a goal, which generally involves recognizing that there are things wrong with our society and committing to doing something about it. These problems cut across strictly defined problems of patriarchy, racism, classism and xenophobia, such that activism becomes a struggle against a generalized category of 'oppressive systems.' Nevertheless, a minority-based or identity-based community will still serve as an important bridge for many people, leading into this sphere of activism. According to Ali Engel, a coordinator of McGill's Queer-Straight Alliance and a participant at the discussion, "we need to tie different forms of injustice together to stop social injustice, but everyone has to come to this understanding of systems of oppression in their own way." She explains, "I first became involved in queer activism, and then began to understand the linkages to women's oppression, to poverty, to racism. Now, queer activism isn't as central to me as social injustice in general. But everyone has to learn this in their own way, and identity politics can be powerful to get someone involved."

Second, many have argued that queer activism - or any form of activism - is meaningless or powerless unless allied with other social movements. As just one example, the need to address questions of social class within queer activism became clear early on during the discussion. Recognizing this need for class analysis first requires some probing into the panelists' introductory statements.



et Nation. During the course of the two hour session, this group engaged a lively discussion which showed that there are not only many issues, but also many questions for queer activists to remain 'bothered' about.

On Communities Based On Activism

One remark made during the opening comments sparked a great deal of discussion about issues of community and identity: Wright's statement that "without community, there is no activism." This assertion can be problematized in a number of ways. It ignores, for instance, the potential of individuals to effect change on their own. One participant from Concordia University argued that Wright's statement

Indeed, a familiar motto of many social movements is that 'the personal is political.'

Another problem with only associating activism with communities relates to inclusivity; whose communities are being considered? As another participant felt, many of the panelists' references to "our queer brothers and sisters," "our culture" and "our community" could be alienating. She argued that "you have to feel like you belong in a community in order to get involved."

While LBGTGM (Lesbians, Bisexuals, Gays and Transgendered Students of McGill) was much applauded during the panel for its success in organizing Queer Pride Week, it has also been criticized on matters of exclusion. The point of concern here are trans issues. According to Emily Harris-

Other?

the Queer Movement

Solidarity or Standing Alone?

In these opening remarks, many speakers touched on the need for solidarity, for 'community' (recognizing the problems associated with that term). For instance, an important question which Carpenter repeatedly posed involved interrogating our motivations for engaging in the activities we engage in; she asked, "why are we doing this? Are we struggling to get a piece of the power pie? Or are we struggling to work with others in changing power structures?"

Multiple speakers alluded to the value of social events in addition to political events which seek to build community movements; even gatherings such as parties can help bring people together.

On the other hand, Jensen explained the value of her own approach of standing alone, rather than focusing exclusively on community-building. Her goals are "to stand up and say to the world, here I am. To live without apology. And to remind the world, 'you get no votes in my life - I'm not adjusting my world for you.'" Jensen links this attitude to the strength required to simply exist as a transgender person in our society - and even within queer communities (as with LAGEM, mentioned above). Out of this strength is built a spirit of self-sufficiency and self-confidence. This is well represented in her utter rejection of the 'Standards of Care,' the infamous international standards which oppressively regulate transsexuality and transgender people's lives. After proclaiming her anarchist political dispositions, Jensen asserted, "I don't care what the state thinks my sex is; I find it intolerable that the state has any place in my sexual morphology."

In a similar vein, Jensen advocated a 'go-it-alone' attitude in suggesting ways of subverting problems like this which pervade our public institutions. For transsexuals seeking a sex change operation, since

"the best care is private," Jensen suggested as an example "working at McDonald's for a few years to earn the money to pay for it."

The Need for A Class Analysis

Panelists and participants may no doubt respect and/or subscribe to Jensen's anarchist values and strong sense of confidence, as well as contrasting notions of solidarity and community voiced during the discussion. Indeed, Fisher provided another such example in describing a man from Medicine Hat, Alberta, who went around his community asking others to sign a petition. His actions were part of a current movement to add "gender identity" to British Columbia's human rights legislation, and constituted a powerful act of stand-alone activism.

But given all the above statements, one cannot help but ask what we are really doing about class issues. What is queer activism really doing about overthrowing oppressive institutions in solidarity with others, particularly along class lines? Indeed, Pates remarked that "gay white men in this city are not all always that disadvantaged - especially those who are commercially involved in the Village." Though in a different context, Jensen analogously



quipped that "the Village is a closet."

For many, therefore, it is simply not good enough to work at McDonald's to pay for a sex

change operation (never mind Pates' observation that it is impossible anyway), and it is simply not good enough to just throw parties. Further, in her initial comments, Wright mentioned that queer activism had changed much since she first got involved in the 1980s, and that, for instance, there are very few demonstrations in Montréal these days. But as Carpenter had already pointed out, a major demonstration has just been organized in this country by the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), in which students and other activists voice their dissent against rising tuition fees and the government's destruction of basic social services. The problem is that there are plenty of resources in our society, but we often believe there are no protests in Montréal any more worth protesting.

Pates articulately addressed this concern in her introduction (though it was mildly criticized as an overly intimidating work of academia). For Pates, queerness is situated within theories of resistance, in which adherents "assume that sexuality is an institution, and frequently an oppressive one the theory often sees queerness as potentially revolutionary and as undermining existing hierar-

chies, as coming out of an oppositional stance with political and social implications."

If we subscribe to this view, queer activism is inherently linked with anti-racist, anti-patriarchal and anti-classist resistance. Indeed, one of the familiar chants at the many demonstrations in this city is one calling for "sol, sol, sol, solidarité!"

Furthermore, this struggle reproduces itself within queer circles; Hays lamented that with the destruction of the "best health care system in the world" here in Canada, "we're moving into a two-tiered system where, for instance, poor gay men can't afford protease inhibitors, but rich gay men can."

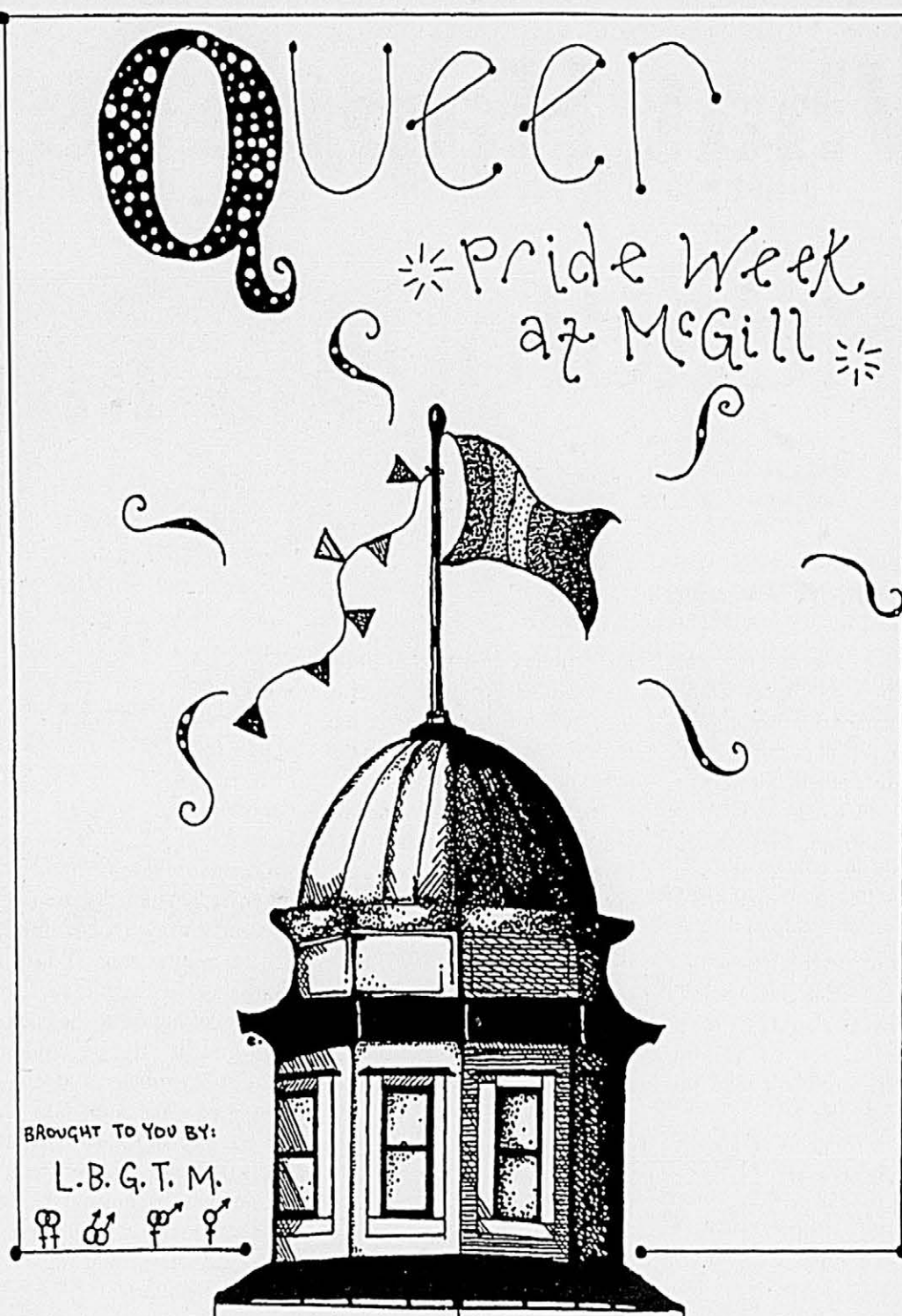
A Choice to be Made

During debate on the relevance of identity politics, Fisher argued that struggles based on identity can indeed be important, since queer people are all negatively identified by society. While this may be true, it is also arguable that this is only relevant where the identity becomes action-based, or where we choose to act on them.

This may sound reminiscent of ideas out of 1970s 'gay politics'

which queer people are all too familiar with - the argument that same-sex desire or 'homosexuality' may be innate or essential, but gay *identity* (and, by extension, activism) is completely chosen. But there is also a deeper question here, represented in the use of the term 'queer activism' and not 'gay activism' in the event title. Those of us who choose to identify ourselves and our activism as queer have chosen not only to save our mouths the hassle of spelling out "LBGT," but have also chosen to commit to the term's inclusivity regarding sexual orientation and the term's solidarity with other social movements.

While the panel discussion's title asked whether we should 'ACT-UP' or simply 'not bother,' the answer to this question seemed hardly disputed. Indeed, early on during the evening, Fisher paraphrased Martin Luther King in arguing that the source of our problems "is not the actions of the bad people, but the silence of the good people." One answer Tuesday's discussion may have given us, however, is that the silence of queer activism may lie in its failure to choose to recognize its own queer nature.



What Happens to Our

Reading between the lines of

Youth?

by Ira Nayman

Have you ever wondered what would happen to Charles Schultz' Peanuts characters if they grew up?

On the recent occasion of the comic strip's fiftieth anniversary, I did. It seemed reasonable to me that Charlie Brown, a loser his entire life, would have gotten himself a gun and been contemplating suicide. Lucy would be a famous radio psychiatrist with a string of failed marriages behind her. Schroeder would be a reclusive musical genius who no longer performed in public, but reminded people he was still around by periodically releasing an album. And so on.

In writing this sketch, I was just one in a long line of satirists who reconsidered ideas of childhood innocence by reworking the icons we grew up with. In the 1960s, for example, the American satirical magazine *The Realist* published a cartoon featuring Disney characters such as Mickey Mouse shooting up drugs and Snow White having sex with the Seven Dwarfs. Also in that decade, the British satirical magazine *Oz* was tried for obscenity, partially because of a cartoon depicting Rupert the Bear having sex. In the 1980s, a novel called *Krazy Kat* put George Herriman's creation on Freud's couch and made him/her a witness of the first atomic bomb blast.

More recently, there was *Tintin Untold*, performed at Theatre 1774 in Montreal. The one man play written and starring William R. Young starts in Nazi Germany, where Hergé's fictional young journalist meets Hitler and is seduced by an amoral young woman. In the play, Tintin's adventure on the moon is reimagined as an erotic encounter between him and his mentor,

the Captain. Ultimately, Tintin finds himself in Quebec during the October Crisis, where he has to deal with the death of his beloved dog Milou.

For those unfamiliar with him, Tintin's comic book adventures have sold over 100 million copies in more than 30 languages throughout the world. Marguerite Duras wrote of him in 1957: "One can say there is a Tintin International. That all children in the civilized world have a Tintin culture before they have one of their own,

original works than the urge to reconsider our youths, however; if that was all we wanted to do, we could simply go back to the original stories. These new works based on childhood favourites, must add something new. "I know that...there was a lot of subtext to the books I read that he [Hergé] couldn't make very explicit," Young suggested. "Yes, I do take him [Tintin] on to an adventure that Hergé probably would not have done; but I think that, looking at the inner soul of a human Tintin would be entirely different than looking at a comic book Tintin." Suzuki added that when she explained the story to people, they were not surprised by the homoerotic relationship between Tintin and Captain Haddock portrayed in the play because, even though it was never made explicit in the original books, as adults they had assumed it.

Although the new works must add something new to the originals, Young believed it was necessary for the new works to stay true to the spirit of the originals. "I do think there is a responsibility the artist has of staying true to the character," he stated. Young did allow, however, that where to draw the line was subjective: "Someone else may have had a whole different feeling about Tintin, and done it in an entirely different way. And I might look at it and say, 'No, you shouldn't have done that to Tintin,' but I could be wrong."

that all of them, uniformly, drink Tintin milk as though it were tap water."

Karen Suzuki, who directed *Tintin Untold*, stated that works like the play give us the opportunity to explore how our perspective on our youthful experiences changes in adulthood. "As adults, to be revisiting it, is exciting because you do see so many different things, as with anything you see as a child," she said. "Rereading any book you read as a teenager or a child is an important thing to do, as an artist and as a human being."

There must be more to these

original works than the urge to reconsider our youths, however; if that was all we wanted to do, we could simply go back to the original stories. These new works based on childhood favourites, must add something new. "I know that...there was a lot of subtext to the books I read that he [Hergé] couldn't make very explicit," Young suggested. "Yes, I do take him [Tintin] on to an adventure that Hergé probably would not have done; but I think that, looking at the inner soul of a human Tintin would be entirely different than looking at a comic book Tintin." Suzuki added that when she explained the story to people, they were not surprised by the homoerotic relationship between Tintin and Captain Haddock portrayed in the play because, even though it was never made explicit in the original books, as adults they had assumed it.

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satirist, but a Disney animator who placed a frame of Jessica Rabbit naked into the film *Who Shot Roger Rabbit*? Another reason for revisiting childhood icons is to reveal the fact that they are often an excuse for adults to indulge in a dishonest nostalgia for the innocence of youth. A large part of the reason I wrote the Charlie Brown sketch was to show that the things we think are wrong in adulthood

have their seeds in childhood, to undermine this false nostalgia. Ultimately, the root of the im-

that revisiting childhood icons should not be done solely to shock. But is that what was really going on with, say, *The Realist* depiction of Disney characters? Such reimaginings are a reminder that children's literature and movies are created by adults (hence all the adult subtexts); it wasn't a

"Marguerite Duras wrote of [Tintin] in 1957: 'One can say there is a Tintin International. That all children in the civilized world have a Tintin culture before they have one of their own, that all of them, uniformly, drink Tintin milk as though it were tap water.'"

pulse to satirize the works of art we enjoyed in childhood may be to remind us that our ideas of childhood as a time of innocence are themselves a form of nostalgia. Depending upon their age, children can pick up a lot of the adult subtexts in many of these works. In addition, in their imaginations many children make their own use of the characters which isn't always as innocent as we remember. Young and Suzuki's reverence for Tintin, their unwillingness to use him to shock, may be because they didn't grow up with the character, didn't relate to him as children, so they aren't driven by the same creative impulse as others who are more openly satirical.

One important aspect to keep in mind in this discussion is that the satirical works are intended for an adult audience. They are not meant to undermine the innocence of children experiencing Tintin, Disney or Charlie Brown for the first time. This is because these and many other characters from childhood are part of the culture of adults. "I personally feel very strongly that Tintin has taken on his own life aside from how people remember him, because he's been such an icon for so long," claimed Federico Gonzalez, who wrote the music for *Tintin Untold*. "I think that people think he's grown up, in a cultural sense, and in many ways become a cult figure as much as a childhood memory."



THE TINTIN WE ALL KNOW AND LOVE



NEW AND IMPROVED TINTIN?

COURTESY OF THEATRE 1774

Sexuality, repressed and otherwise

Francophone play explores tension between sexuality and social behaviour

by Patrick Levesque

The divisions — between adolescence and young adulthood, love and lust, sanity and madness — are unclear. These divisions form a fertile ground, in which many writers have planted various seeds and reaped results just as various. Arthur Schnitzler, Austrian author of the turn of the century, is one of them. Even though he had reservations toward psychoanalysis, he professed a great interest in it. Freud himself had a great admiration for him, as his characters were often confronted to their own inner feelings, repressed by societal conventions and the resulting psychological turmoil. Renowned for his direct and unabashed allusions to sexuality, his work has long been enshrouded with controversy.

In the play *Mademoiselle Else*, based on a short story by Schnitzler, a young woman, Else (Brigitte Saint-Aubin), is resting in a remote vacation resort. Strong forces are acting on the woman, weaving together a web in which she is soon to be caught. Her nascent sexuality inspires in this young virgin dreams of desire for her cousin Paul (François-Étienne Paré), which are countered by the prudishness of her

socialized self. Restrained by a world where women are seen as, and allowed to be, either pure and virtuous or prostitutes, internal conflicts begin to emerge.

Meanwhile, her father is in dire financial straits and only the elderly von Dorsday (Jean-Pierre Ouellet), long-time friend of the family, can provide them with the funds necessary to pay back her father's debt. Overcoming her repugnance for von Dorsday, Else pleads with the man, who accepts, but at a price: for 15 minutes, she will have to expose her naked body before his eyes. Torn apart, her contradictory feelings slowly draw her into madness.

Schnitzler's text, without falling into facile moralizing, justly points out some of the hidden features of the early century Viennese society. Women are viewed as objects, and someone with enough power and high social status can use and abuse them as he wishes. The victims take the blame for themselves, feeling



guilty of their coveted sexuality.

Individuals without money are viewed as social failures, figures of shame, burdens for their family and those who provide for them. So when a wealthy man, a friend of the family imposes his will on a confused virgin who also happens to be far away from her parents, everything is kept hidden by social conventions. Else finds herself beyond help and doesn't dare speak of her dilemma out loud, fearing the humiliation her father's debt would bring her, and desperately avoiding to be tagged as a woman of loose morality.

Carmen Jolin, who designs the theatre adaptation of *Mademoiselle Else*, is also responsible for the

play's excellent staging. The strongest emotions, the entire psychological build-up of the work here are carried by words unsaid, facial expressions, gestures and attitudes. These have been worked out quite extensively, even to the point of choreography. In a certain scene, all the characters move and act on the rhythm of expressionist piano music (provided by Alexandre Solopov). Body language and expression is especially strong in Brigitte Saint-Aubin, from whom exudes a charismatic aura of both sensuality and innocence, incarnating this cruel conflict with incredible ease.

The main flaw lies in the speech of the actor, which is not totally natural at the beginning of the play. Fortunately, this small defect takes less importance as the action and

moral dilemmas unveil themselves further, and later turns out to be a quality by conveying an eerie feeling of insanity.

So how does Else choose? Will she or not denude herself in front of von Dorsday? For interest's sake, this question will remain unanswered here. But the outcome, although the natural conclusion of Else's deplorable state, is wholly unexpected. The matter of physical nudity, strangely, turns out to be of small relevance. More important is the mental and social exhibition, portrayed by Schnitzler, of Else's doubts, as she considers the options between prostituting herself or letting her father down, and between natural desires and society's ideals and values.

In *Mademoiselle Else*, it's the main character's soul that is stripped bared and exposed for all to see. Deprived of intimacy, she is subtly revealed to the audience, leaving it as the lights fade out with a strange, yet oddly fascinating feeling of voyeurism.

Mademoiselle Else is held until February 15 at Espace la Veillée 1371, Ontario Est Admission 20\$, 16\$ for students at 526-6582

Blood Lust Satisfaction

A look at *Irma Vep*

by Zha-Zha Plandowsk

Okay. These are the cinematic facts on *Irma Vep*:

1) Directed by Olivier Assayas, former editor of the renowned French periodical *Les Cahiers du Cinema*.

2) Starring Maggie Cheung (as herself), a "Hong Kong action diva" playing the role of a burglar named Irma Vep. And if you're at all familiar with 60's French cinema then you'll recognize Jean-Pierre Léaud easing into his comfortable typecast as the intellectual, eccentric director, René Vidal, infatuated with his leading lady.

3) It's a satirical look at the making of a film.

4) Vidal is doing a remake of Louis Feuillade's classic *Les Vampires*, a ten-part silent serial about a band of Paris thieves led by Irma Vep (the name is an anagram of "vampire").

Okay. You've probably already

read the enthusiastic reviews. I'm not going to rehash the comments of how wonderfully it critiques French, Hong Kong, and American cinema. Of course, this is a *culture* newspaper. It requires a careful analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, and how it functions in the bigger picture...or dare I say, "cultural context". Folks, what you want is a real impression of this movie so you can say to your friends: "Hey, I've already heard a lot about this movie, but it got a great review by the Daily's *Culture* has convinced me to see it." Or so I wish. So, here's the meat.

Assayas filmed in natural light which makes us more sensitive to instances when the camera focuses on the composition. The shot follows the character until we are convinced that we see the action in our own eyes. The footage transports us into the characters' immediate en-

vironment: his hands, the railing she's leaning on - details such as these take on a particular resonance. We are led into the visual perceptions of the on-screen characters. This cinematic expression makes the process of film making seem more plausible, if not more majestic, in its dimensions.

Maggie Cheung is amazing. In addition to playing herself, Cheung must convincingly portray the sub-character Irma Vep. She gives off an authentic, real-life quality but her interaction with the other characters goes beyond the reality of a chaotic film set. We are left to speculate whether Maggie Cheung is indeed the intelligent, soft spoken Hong Kong star or the Maggie Cheung portraying the erotic night creature Irma Vep that becomes indistinguishable from her character as she slips into a latex body suit and slinks among the shadowed corridor of

her hotel.

This film also goes beyond the confines of storyline and dialogue. We are not just being given a perception of the film industry. *Irma Vep* is showing us something that is far more intoxicating and frightening. We are witness to the metamorphosis of the actors and crew as they succumb to the director's creative will and how destructive that 'will' is when the medium of expression is unable to communicate the director's vision. We see the potentiality for film to be all powerful and inspiring like a worshipped and oppressive deity. And if the medium is as influential as the movie shows us, then this film is telling us about our own metamorphosis. Like Maggie Cheung, we are influenced by the paradox between the reality of film making and the reality the film, itself, dictates.

Irma Vep is not merely

critiquing French, Hong Kong, and American film making but showing us an experiment in progress. Assayas has chosen *Les Vampires* to demonstrate a parallel between the action choreography of old French cinema and the new action epics prevalent in Hong Kong theatres. Jean-Pierre Léaud is cast to show the resilience of old characters in new themes. And Maggie Cheung is the spice in an old recipe showing that the vitality of Hong Kong cinema or even that of Hollywood is important to keeping contemporary cinema alive. *Irma Vep* ultimately benefits from the merger of distinct cinematic styles and attains a unique intellectualism that will be sure to satisfy even the hard core experts of cinema.

Irma Vep is playing at the Cinéma du Parc.

Artistic Hoopla — Much Ado About... Something

two exhibits, one approachable the other not, saunter in the wicked world of art, culture and surroundings

by salman
m. husain

On January 10, 1998, while my reality was that of a hydro refugee due to *The Ice Storm* (directed by God and not Ang Lee), I went to the opening night of *FUR*, the third annual *les livres d'artistes*, primarily because I was excited about seeing artist Kevin Crombie's new work.

skins, in contrast to the plain and often furry backgrounds, lusciously. Steven Rouke's work deals with representation and identity issues (just one level reading), which he explores through (faux) fur, feather and the pursuit of Dr. Seuss. Steven Rouke examines displacement issues (among others) by repeating text in a mantra-like fashion and eroticizing Dr. Seuss.

the lap-tions i s t s - espe- show. Usually proach exhibited by art-very cautiously cially if their works are included in the exhibits. This is due to the fact that in a majority of cases, in my experience, the artists tend to import undue attention to their work over the works of the other artists. But, in this case, my fears were unfounded. Gray Fraser's promoted his own works on equal footing with the others, if his work stood out, it was due to its own merit.

When I spoke to Gray, he told me the story of how he came to the organization of the title and the show and the history of the building. According to Gray, the building was a "furrier hot spot and the gallery hooks are still in the ceiling to hold the

pre-encased coverings are in turn in brass for ing and better impact. This exhibition has a very tactile approach to the works. The photographs are titled and a corresponding number/title is in a book of reference; all this is contained in a square black satin box with brass endings. Its interior is in red and placed on an angled gray velvet cloth with tassels. *Ritual's* photographs not only show the subject in the midst of the cultural ritual - shaving - but also has actual samples of hair (but that's another article altogether).

Anne Sangil Kim's work *You Can't Judge A Book By It's Cover* is composed of decimated chicken legs, fanned pages of a hard cover book, and last, the head of the chicken is replaced with a hen's head and is topped with rabbit-fur. Anne Sangil Kim explains it as a "book masquerading as a chicken—a hen posing as a cock. The exhibition includes the chicken head surveying the gallery—which adds to the interesting dialogue between the viewer and the artist. It is almost like the artist is vicariously having a dialogue with the viewer.

This show objectified books in a tactical media approach. It gave me opportunities to touch, explore, play and have fun.

Modus Operandi Cororis

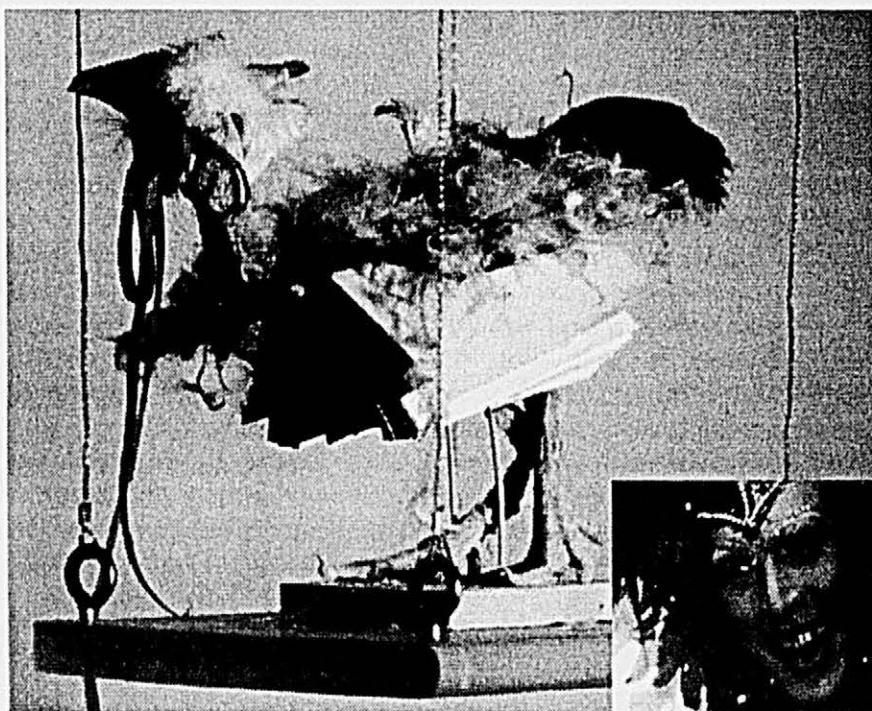
The recent works of Concordians did just what the exhibit *Come into My Queer World* in the same space did—create controversy. (Two years ago some Muslim homophobe had complained and threatened about a painting of Jesus with a hard on.) The annual Queer exhibition at Concordia this year is named *Modus Operandi Cororis*.

The day I went I was unable to get close enough to see the works satisfactorily due to yellow tape closing off the building (watch the falling ice!)

and am unable to comment on them.

However my comment is on the exhibition itself. *Modus Operandi Cororis* is a small exhibition, and could be expanded. There is room and space, physically and philosophically, but the seven artists present a blitz-like glimpse of Queer realities in

PHOTO BY KEVIN CROMBIE



Sailor/Bear—one 'sea otter'

In *FUR* Glen's work is a fur(lined)covered briefcase that explores Queer Bear Identity by including its codes, icons and a book. The *Bear Briefcase* is representative of the urban bear culture, which has its roots in working-class imagery of hunters, trappers, construction workers, loggers and the like. "For myself bears and bear movement offer a space wherein a body can be deeply erotic without reiterating the conventions of the clean-shaven, buff, and muscled gay male. Simply put another way, Fat and 'fur' can be quite fun," states Glenn (aka Sea Otter) and all I can say is that I hope Glenn keeps finding this space in his work.

Other works

Some eye catching works included Steven Rouke's *Fur*; Gary Fraser's *Magnetic Attractions*; Kevin Crombie's *Ritual* and Ann Sangil Kim's *Can't Judge a Book by its Cover*.

Most fun, and I think art should be fun, was Steven Rouke's *Fur*. It's a fold-out book! It's a pop-up book! It's a repetitive text! *Fur* deals with erotic, sensual and sexual poses of boyz laid out in fabu poses that reveal their

Dr. Seuss is sexy, baby! Who knew!?!?

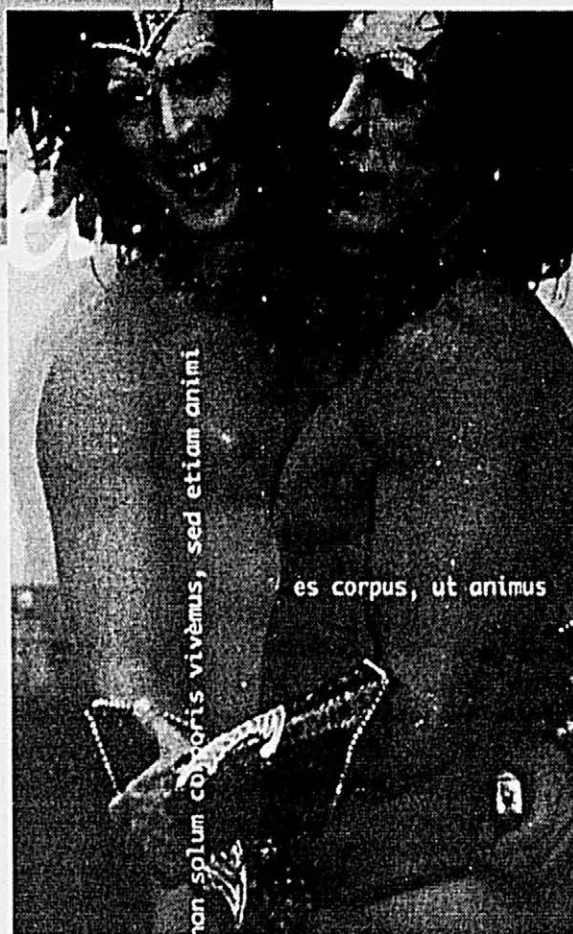
Gray Fraser's *Magnetic Attractions* is a dreamy sexual fantasy with a natural, sexy, hair-covered man, trains, and boyhood. Sounds deevicious, but seeing is believing. Below is an excerpt from the textual part of the hockey card size fridge-magnet book; allow it to engulf you in its maleness.

"...The clattering of the train on the tracks evoked boyhood memories...

The warm sunshine heated the body creating droplets of sweat that clung to the fur making him moist to his touch...

I watched as he remembered circle jerks, camping, boys and trains..."

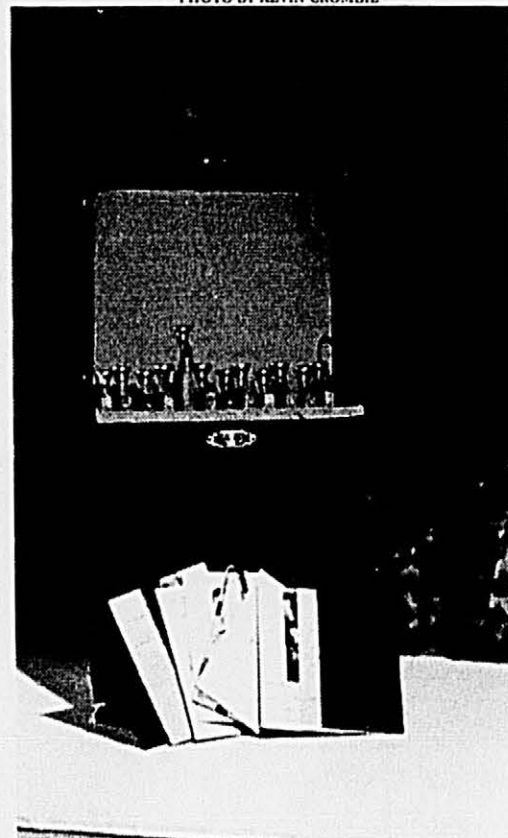
Gray Fraser is also the curator of



bobbins for the sewing machines. This and hot furry animals [read men] influenced my decision."

One unusual thing Gray did was ask for word of mouth submissions, as opposed to the usual call for submissions. He said that he was "looking for books with usual [read unusual] bindings that question how we read and view books."

Kevin Crombie's book *Ritual* deals with how he sees shaving as a complex cultural ritual. The photographs,



art effectively. I found the exhibit lacking in womyn art and the superbly written curatorial statement also focused more on the "gay" in the Queer. And an ineffective attempt was made to connect the curatorial statement to some vague understanding of Tantric in Hindu Mythology. I mention this, because the statement can stand on its own, without this reference. Since the Concordia Queer Art Show is annual, I look forward to seeing its progressive nature in years to come. Needless to say, it is imperative that the show (continue) must go on.

"FUR" Galerie 303, 372 St-Catherine West
January 10 to February 28
Hours: Mon-Sat 12 to 5

"Modus Operandi Corporis Webster library building (Lobby)
Concordia Univ. 1400 de Maisonneuve West
Jan 20-31

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Anthropology/archeology Kathrine from South Shore, met at Van Gogh Dec. 31st (Blue Suit) but did not have a chance to exchange numbers, please get in touch: l.g.lewis@usa.net.

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McGill Student Accounts Office



Tuition Tax Receipts 1997 will be mailed by February 28, 1998 to our students with a North American mailing address on file. Those students whose mailing address is outside North America may pick up their receipts at our office, room 301 James Administration, after February 28, 1998.

All students should ensure that their mailing addresses are always kept up to date. We will be using the mailing address on file as of January 27, 1998 when sending out 1997 tax receipts.

Thank-you.

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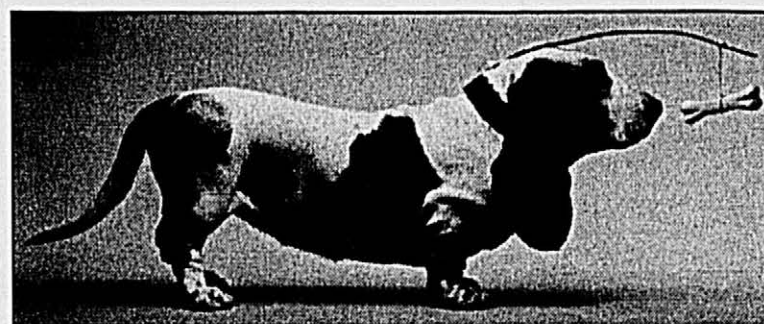
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Thoughtful and detailed letters of nomination carry greater weight in the selection process than mere numbers of nominations.

All types of teaching, from very large lectures to seminars, tutorials, and thesis direction, should be taken into consideration.

Deadline: Friday, February 27, 1998

Please send nominations to:
M. Deslauriers, Chair
Committee on Teaching
Department of Philosophy
Leacock Building
855 Sherbrooke St. West
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